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Student perceptions on the development of speaking skills: A course evaluation in the preparatory class

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Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the student perceptions and perspectives on their progress in the speaking skills course at the Preparatory school of English Language Teaching program in the Faculty of Education at Sakarya University. In this study, the CIPP model developed by Stufflebeam was taken as a basis of evaluation to measure the perceptions of the preparatory students towards the effectiveness of the course. As is known, the CIPP model consists of four core concepts: context, input, process, and product evaluation. In this study, the stage of process was evaluated by means of a four part questionnaire consisting of 66 items and 5 open ended questions. The main objective of the evaluation at this stage was to find out defects in the procedural design or its implementation in process to come up with tangible suggestions for the refinement and improvement of the program. The evaluation of the course revealed several significant results in that more pair work and group work are favored by the students. Student-centered classes are preferred by the majority of the students. More peer correction is regarded as a helpful activity that might also serve to constitute a friendly atmosphere in a class. Students' perceptions clearly indicated that the most frequently used type of instructional method was student presentations. From the open ended question section, it is obvious that students do not prefer lecture type classes. They prefer interactive, entertaining and cooperative tasks in their learning process.

Key words: Evaluation, Process, Implementation, CIPP Model, Perception.

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1. Introduction

Recently, the demand for English teachers has grown in Turkish education system since learning English language has gained importance in finding a decent job, being able to follow scientific journals written in English and keeping up with new technologies. Therefore, if one wants to remain updated in the world of science, s/he cannot do without a proper understanding of English. This need is, to a certain extent, met through preparatory schools, which give students an academic year of English education. Preparatory schools enable students to have a proficient knowledge of English so that they can follow their courses in their departments effectively. Because of this crucial mission attributed to preparatory schools, it is essential that the preparatory school programs should be evaluated so as to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

Scriven (2003) states that evaluation is not just the process of determining facts about things, but it is expected to come up with a particular type of conclusion using evaluative terminology such as bad, good, better, worse, well, ill, elegant, poor and so forth to indicate the significance, value, worth or merit of an object.

According to Worthen (1990), evaluation is merely determining the value of something, which can be applied to programs of any size in educational settings. Language education practitioners have recently begun to realize the benefits of broader notions of evaluation as a means of informing program development, and focusing on program processes (Alderson & Beretta, 1992; Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005; Lynch, 1996). Evaluation can take two forms depending on the objectives. If the aim is to improve the program, it is typically called formative evaluation, and if the aim is to decide on the fate of the program, then it is called summative evaluation (Worthen 1990).

In order to gain a full understanding of the evaluation process the term 'evaluation' needs to be defined clearly.

Evaluation has a great number of definitions in the field. Lynch (1996), for example, defines evaluation as the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions. As such, both qualitative and quantitative forms can be used to evaluate information, and different methods such as observation or the administration of pen-and-paper tests can be used to gather data. As for program evaluation, Lynch states that it not only provides insiders with valuable information on how the current work can be improved but also offers accountability to outside stakeholders (Lynch (1996).

Stufflebeam, Madaus and Kellaghan (2002) conceptualize the evaluation as neither a once-off nor a static activity. Brown (1995), in his explication of a systematic approach to language program development, points out that evaluation is the heart that connects and gives blood to all the other program elements.

Similarly, Richards (2001) defines evaluation as a systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the program and to assess its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved.

Dickins and Germaine (1992) claim that there is a common belief that evaluation means the same as testing, and evaluation is done while students are being tested. However, testing is only one component of the evaluation process. They further state that evaluation is an indispensable part of teaching and learning. Evaluation should never be underestimated as a standardized and prepackaged process. However, planning evaluation could be a standardized, prepackaged process, and the steps involved in conducting an evaluation could clearly be identified (Ogle, 2002).

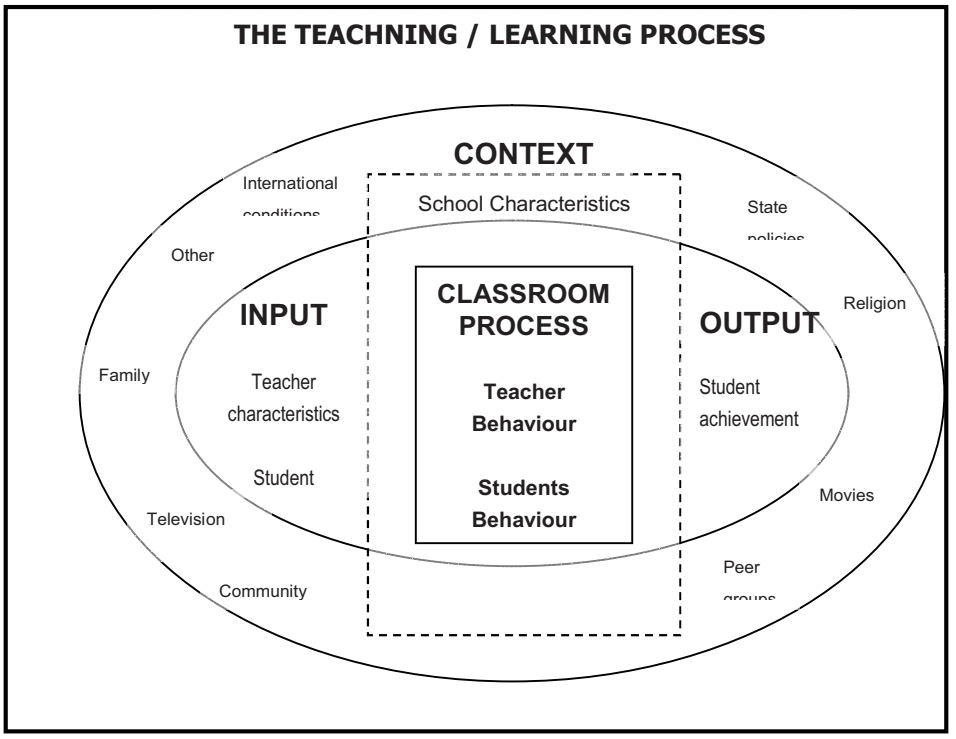
Scheerens, Glas and Thomas (2005) define educational evaluation as judging the value of educational objects on the basis of systematic information gathering in order to support decision making and learning. In line with the other practitioners and writers Scheerens, Glas and Thomas (2005) define educational evaluation as judging the value of educational objects on the basis of systematic information gathering in order to support decision making and learning.

Stufflebeam (2002) describes the CIPP Model as adaptable and widely applicable to evaluate materials, personnel, students, programs, and projects in a range of disciplines and most important purpose of this evaluation is not to prove, but to improve.

The CIPP model's central components are context, input, process, and product evaluation. The objectives, methods and the relation of decision making functions of the components are given in Table 1.1 (Huitt, 2003). Table1.2 illustrates Huitt's (2003) model of instructional process which identifies the major categories of variables that are related to school achievement.

Although the table 1 depicts the important features of the CIPP model, the components of the model might be summarized as follow: Context evaluation assesses needs, problems, and opportunities as bases for defining goals and priorities and judging the significance of outcomes. Input evaluation assesses alternative approaches to meeting needs as a means of planning programs and allocating resources. Process evaluation assesses the implementation of plans to guide activities and later to help explain outcomes. Product evaluation identifies intended and unintended outcomes both to help keep the process on track and determine effectiveness (Stufflebeam, 2002).

Table 1. A transactional model of the teaching/learning process (Huitt, 2003)



Inside the classroom there are a number of elements such as teachers, students, classroom environment and knowledge which are constantly interacting with each other (Huitt, 2003). Institutions can make use of information obtained through CIPP evaluations to solve institutional problems and meet accountability requirements. By disseminating evaluation reports, institutions can help stakeholders to participate in decision making process.

Table 2. Four types of evaluation in CIPP model.

	Context Evaluation	Input Evaluation	Process Evaluation	Product
Objective	To define the institutional context, to identify the target population and assess their needs, to identify opportunities for addressing the needs, to diagnose problems underlying the needs and to judge whether the proposed objectives are sufficiently responsive to the	To identify and assess system capabilities, alternative program strategies, procedural designs for implementing the strategies, budgets and schedules	To identify or predict in process defects in the procedural design or its implementation, to provide information for the preprogrammed decisions and to record and judge procedural events and activities	To collect descriptions judgments of outcomes and to relate them to objectives and to context, input and process information and to interpret their worth and merit
Method	By using such methods as system analysis, survey, document review, hearings, interviews, diagnostic tests and the Delphi techniques.	By inventorying and analyzing available human and material resources, solution strategies and procedural designs for relevance, feasibility, and economy	By monitoring the activity's potential procedural barriers and remaining alert to unanticipated ones, by obtaining specified information for programmed decision	By defining operationally and measuring outcome criteria, by collecting judgments of outcomes from stakeholders and by performing both qualitative and quantitative analyses.
Relation to decision making in the change process	For deciding upon the setting to be served, the goals associated with meeting needs or using opportunities, and the objectives associated with solving problems	For selecting sources of support, solution strategies and procedural designs	For implementing and refining the program design and procedure	For deciding to continue, terminate, modify or refocus a change activity and to present a clear record of effects(intended and unintended, positive and negative)

From *Evaluation Models Viewpoints on Educational and Human Services Evaluation Second Edition*. In Kellaghan, T., Madaus,G. F., Stufflebeam, D.L (Eds.) Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 2002 p.302.

Process evaluation includes three strategies. The first is to detect or predict deficiencies in the procedural design or its implementation stage, the second is to provide information for decisions and the third is to maintain a record of procedures as they take place. This stage, which includes the three strategies, occurs during the implementation stage of the curriculum development. It is a piloting process conducted to refine the program before district- wide implementation. From such evaluation, project decision makers obtain information they need to anticipate and overcome procedural difficulties and to make decisions (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1988).

The focus of *process evaluation* is the implementation of a program or a strategy. The main purpose is to provide feedback about modification if the implementation proves inadequate. In process evaluation, formative assessment serves to the purpose to a great extent. Formative assessment tools, in their non-evaluative nature, are

quizzes or assignments which are employed to provide timely, specific and corrective feedback to the learners and instructors (Cizek, 2009).

Production or progress evaluations are conducted to determine whether a program meets its goals. Implementation evaluations are conducted to determine whether a program is being conducted as planned (Ogle, 2002).

In paralel with the definitions above, Alkin (2011) also states that formative evaluation is conducted during the implementation and utilised to provide information to see how things are going. It might also provide the information whether the goals of the program are achievable or not.

2. Program Description

2.1 Evaluation Setting:

The evaluation took place in the Preparatory school of English Language Teaching (ELT) program, Sakarya University. The ELT program started education with 45 students in the fall term of 2010-2011 academic year..

2.2 Participants:

30 students who failed a language proficiency test enrolled in the preparatory school comprised the sample of the study. The evaluation process took 4 weeks in the middle of the term The participants were authorized to study in the department of English Teaching by the Turkish Higher Education Council according to their scores on the University Entrance Examination. Characteristics of participants were analysed by means of descriptive statistics and given in the following tables.

Table 3. Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	5	16,7
Female	25	83,3
Total	30	100,0

Table 4. Age

	Frequency	Percent
18 and under	17	56,7
19-24	13	43,3
Total	30	100,0

Table 5. Type of high school

	Frequency	Percent
General high school, Vocational high school	14	46,7
Super/ Anatolian Anatolian teacher / science/ Anatolian technique high	16	53,3

school,		
Total	30	100,0

Table 6. English course

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	46,7
No	16	53,3
Total	30	100,0

2.3 Evaluation Questions

This evaluation study sought answers to the following questions:

1) What are the students' perceptions of the speaking class?
2) What needs to be done to improve the quality of speaking class?
3) Is there a correlation between the success and student perceptions?

2.4 Evaluation Design

Following an initial meeting with the course instructor, it was agreed that a formative evaluation was needed to learn how the classes were 'going' in order to make necessary amendments in classroom procedures. The result of the evaluation would be used both during the rest of the semester and during the next one, when he would be teaching the same class.

To measure students' perceptions of the speaking class, a questionnaire that included 66 items was adapted from Erozan (2005). The questionnaire was composed of four parts. The first part (items 1-4) gathered information about students' gender, age, high school type, and previous experience with English. The other parts were Likert-type scales. The second part (5-26) had twenty-one 5-point Likert scale questions to measure students' perceptions of the teaching-learning process. The third part (27-44) had nineteen 4- point Likert scale questions about their perceptions of the frequency of classroom activities and methods. The last part (45-66) had twenty-two 3-point Likert scale questions about how frequent the activities should be. In Part 2, the scale ranged from 'I strongly disagree' to 'I strongly agree;' in Part 3, from 'Never' to 'More than I want'; in Part 4, from 'Never' to 'Often'. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire with five items was given at the end of the questionnaire as the fifth part so that the students could elaborate on their answers to the items in the questionnaire

The data obtained from the closed items in the questionnaires were analyzed by using descriptive statistics from SPSS 15.0, through presenting the frequency counts of the responses for each item in the questionnaire. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach alpha) calculated for the reliability study was found to be α=0.80. It was agreed before the administration of the questionnaire that a cut-off point of 60% was validated for decisions about all items. Cut-off score was chosen as 60 arbitrarily because the department, the instructor and the students were new. For example, if more than 60% of the students believed that the class was interesting, it would mean that the students perceived the class positively. To gain insight for the success rate of the students, six in-term scores obtained from all speaking exams were taken into consideration. The correlation between success rate and teaching-learning process was analyzed by means of Pearson Correlation test.

Open-ended items in the questionnaire were analyzed by listing all raw data (all the individual responses) under each item, and then grouping the similar responses, identifying common themes, and counting frequencies. In this part, since the interpretation of the students' opinions was essential to provide deeper insight into the research questions, qualitative method was resorted for open ended questions. Students' answers in the open ended questions were valuable for the evaluator to be able to observe whether there was a consistency between their responses in the closed ended questionnaire and its open ended counterpart. As Patton (1990)

claims, qualitative methods are used to investigate 'What actually happens to people in the program? What they say about what happens to them?' (p.420).

3. Results

3.1 Statistical results-Descriptive Statistics

Students' responses in the 2nd part of the questionnaire showed that students generally had positive perceptions of the items. More than 60% of them agreed or strongly agreed on all the items except 7, 15, 20, 22, and 25.

Table 7. Items related to the student perceptions of teaching and learning process

Item No	Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
8	A variety of activities is used in the course.	f		2	7	11	10
		%		6.7	23.3	36.7	33.3
9	The teacher teaches in an interesting way.	f		1	9	13	7
		%		3.3	30.0	43.3	23.3
10	It is easy to follow the teacher.	f		3	6	20	1
		%		10.0	20.0	66.7	3.3
16	The teacher pays equal attention to all students in the class.	f	1	3	6	14	6
		%	3.3	10.0	20.0	46.7	20.0
21	The lessons are taught in an interesting way.	f			10	17	3
		%			33.3	56.7	10.0

Table 7 indicates that although the items 8, 9, 10, 16, 21 were agreed on 70% or so, 30% of the students remained neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed. From these responses, it seems that about 30% of the students either had difficulty in following the classes or found the classes tedious.

Table 8. Items related to the student perceptions of teaching and learning process

Item No	Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
7	The students have cooperative relationships with each other.	f		2	14	10	4
		%		6.7	46.7	33.3	13.3
15	The teacher uses the board effectively.	f	1	4	8	15	2
		%	3.3	13.3	26.7	50.0	6.7
20	I use only English in class.	f	1	6	12	10	1
		%	3.3	20.0	40.0	33.3	3.3
22	Other students help me to learn in this course.	f	2	3	8	12	5

		%	6.7	10.0	26.7	40.0	16.7
25	The students give sufficient feedback on each other's performance.	f		6	4	14	3
		%		20.0	13.3	46.7	10.0

As indicated in Table 8, the items 7, 15, 20, 22, and 25 revealed that almost 50% of the students did not exchange ideas and collaborative work could not be utilized among them. The item results indicated that the students failed to engage in pair work and group discussions and could not establish class spirit.

Table 9. Items related to the student perceptions of teaching and learning process

Item No	Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Idea	Agree	Strongly Agree
5	There is an efficient use of time in class.	f			6	20	4
		%			20.0	66.7	13.3
6	There is a good student-teacher interaction in the course.	f				23	7
		%				76.7	23.3
11	The teacher's instructions about what we should do are clear.	f		1	8	14	7
		%		3.3	26.7	46.7	23.3
12	The teaching methodology of the teacher is effective in our learning.	f			5	16	9
		%			16.7	53.3	30.0
13	The teacher encourages us to participate in the lessons.	f				19	11
		%				63.3	36.7
14	The teacher uses audio-visual aids (OHP, video, CD player, etc.) effectively in the lessons.	f		1	2	12	15
		%		3.3	6.7	40.0	50.0
17	The teacher's correction our mistakes facilitates our learning.	f	1	1	2	15	11
		%	3.3	3.3	6.7	50.0	36.7
18	I prefer to work individually in class.	f	10	9	5	5	1
		%	33.3	30.0	16.7	16.7	3.3
19	I prefer to work with (a) partner(s) in class.	f		1	5	13	11
		%		3.3	16.7	43.3	36.7
23	The teacher helps me to learn in this course.	f			4	16	10
		%			13.3	53.3	33.3
24	The teacher gives sufficient feedback on our performance.	f		1	9	16	4
		%		3.3	30.0	53.3	13.3

As presented in Table 9, 100% of the students agreed on items 6 and 13, by indicating that they had interactive classes and their teacher motivated them for participation. The items 5, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24 were related to the *instructor performance* and showed that 80% or more of the students were satisfied with their instructor in terms of the methods, techniques and corrective feedback.

Table 10. Items related to the frequency of activities.

Item No	Items		None	Not enough	The right amount	More than I wanted
26	Teacher lecture	f		1	24	5
		%		3.3	80.0	16.7
27	Silent individual work	f	1	3	24	2
		%	3.3	10.0	80.0	6.7
		%				
28	Student presentations	f		1	23	6
		%		3.3	76.7	20
29	Pair work	f			25	5
		%			83.3	16.7
30	Group work	f			24	6
		%			80	20
31	Discussions	f		9	18	3
		%		30	60	10
34	Projects	f		4	22	4
		%		13.3	73.3	13.3
35	Video sessions	f		5	20	5
		%		16.7	66.7	16.7
36	CD sessions	f		1	22	7
		%		3.3	73.3	23.3
37	Homework/Assignment	f		2	24	4
		%		6.7	80	13.3
40	Reading aloud (by students)	f		5	24	1
		%		16.7	80	3.3
41	Reading aloud (by the teacher)	f	1	3	24	2
		%	3.3	10.0	80.0	6.7

As presented in Table 10, Students' responses in the third part of the questionnaire showed that students generally had positive perceptions on the items. Of 19 items consisting the whole third part of the questionnaire, 12 items were found sufficient enough or more than sufficient. Pair work and group work seem to be the most frequently used activities with the percentage of 100% followed by teacher lectures and student presentations with the percentage of %96.

Table 11. Items related to the frequency of activities.

Item No	Items		None	Not enough	The right amount	More than I wanted
32	Games	f	6	16	8	
		%	20	53.3	26.7	
33	Role plays	f	10	12	5	1
		%	33.3	40	16.7	3.3
38	Peer correction	f	4	13	13	
		%	13.3	43.3	43.3	
39	Self correction	f	1	13	15	1
		%	3.3	43.3	50	3.3
42	Songs	f	3	21	6	

		%	10.0	70	20
43	Peer evaluation/feedback	f	5	16	9
		%	16.7	53.3	30.0
44	Self evaluation	f	6	12	12
		%	20	40	40

As indicated in Table 11, the activities in the items 32, 33, 38, 39, 42, 43 and 44 were considered to be used insufficiently or were not used at all. Activities such as role plays with the percentage of %20 , songs with the percentage of %20, games with the percentage of %27 seem to be least used activities followed by peer feedback with the percentage of %30, self evaluation with the percentage of %40, Peer correction with the percentage of %43 and Self correction with the percentage of %53.

Table 12. Items related to the students' preferences of activities

Item No	Items		Never	Sometimes	Frequently
45	Teacher lectures	f		11	19
		%		36.7	63.3
47	Pair work	f		4	26
		%		13.3	86.7
48	Group work	f		8	22
		%		26.7	73.3
52	Video sessions	f		11	18
		%		36.7	63.3
53	Tape sessions	f		6	24
		%		20	80
56	Computer-aided activities	f		7	23
		%		23.3	76.7
59	Teacher correction	f		6	24
		%		20	80
64	Questioning (by the teacher)	f		9	21
		%		30	70

As indicated in Table 12, the activities in the items 45, 47, 48, 52, 53, 56, 59 and 64 were the most preferred activities. The findings of the fourth part of the questionnaire revealed that the participants mostly prefered pair work with the percentage of 86.7%, CD sessions with the percentage of 80% and teacher correction with the percentage of 80% in their Speaking Skills course. Second most wanted activities to be utilized during the courses are listed as computer aided activities with the percentage of 76.7%, group work with the percentage of 73.3% and questioning by the teacher with the percentage of 70%. Though not favored by the participants mostly, teacher lectures with the percentage of 63.3% and video sessions with the percentage of 63.3 could be categorized as moderately wanted activities. When the statistics were taken into consideration, it could be said that the participants stated a firm opinion on the need of pair work activities, teacher correction and the use of multimedia sources in classes.

Table 13. Items related to the students' preferences of activities

Item No	Items		Never	Sometimes	Frequently
46	Individual work	f	7	19	4
		%	23.3	63.3	13.3
49	Role-plays	f	11	14	5
		%	36.7	46.7	16.7
65	Translation	f	7	13	10
		%	23.3	43.3	33.3

As indicated in Table 13 the activities in the items 46, 49 and 65 were not preferred by the participants. Only 16.7 % of the participant wanted to use role play frequently, 33% of the participants preferred translation and 13% prefered individual work during Speaking Skills courses.

3.2 Inferential Statistics

Table 14. T-test results between the age of students and teaching-learning process in Speaking Skills course.

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Degree of freedom	t	p
Process	18 and under	17	79,24	6,778	28	,002	,999
	19-24	13	79,23	7,791			

Table 14 shows that there is no significant difference between the age of students and teaching-learning process in Speaking Skills course (t_{28}=0,002; p>0,05).

Table 15. T-test results between the type of high school and teaching-learning process in Speaking Skills course.

	Type of High School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Degree of freedom	t	p
Process	A	14	80,86	5,736	28	8,027	,248
	B	16	77,81	8,027			

A: General High School, Vocational High School,
B: Super/ Anatolian / Anatolian Teacher / Science/ Anatolian Technique High School.

Table 15 reveals that there is no significant difference between the type of high school and teaching-learning process in Speaking Skills course (t_{28}=8,027; p>0,05).

Table 16. T-test results between previous experience of English course and teaching-learning process in Speaking Skills course.

	English Course	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Degree of freedom	t	p
Process	Yes	14	80,50	6,925	28	,911	,370
	No	16	78,13	7,293			

Table 16 indicates that there is no significant difference between previous English course experience and teaching-learning process in Speaking Skills course (t_{28}= 0,911; p>0,05).

Table 17. Correlation between teaching-learning process and students' success rate

		Success	Process
Success	Pearson Correlation	1	,347
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,060
	N	30	30
Process	Pearson Correlation	,347	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,060	
	N	30	30

Table 17 signifies that there is a moderate correlation between teaching-learning process and students' success rate in Speaking Skills course (p<0,05). As is clearly known, several factors affect students' success in the process of education and Table 5.2.4 illustrates that students' perceptions on the teaching-learning process in Speaking Skills course have an impact on their success rate up to 12% (Determination coefficient, r^2= 0,12).

4. Open-ended Questions

Despite the fact that dialogues and conversations are considered to be the most evident and most frequently used speaking activities in language classrooms, a teacher has always a chance of selecting activities from a variety of tasks (Florez, 1999). Brown (1994) lists the possible in-class activities and tasks in six categories as imitative, intensive, transactional, responsive, interpersonal and extensive.

In light of these categories, the students' ideas about the most useful activities related to both receptive and productive skills were analyzed in the open ended question part. 22 students stated that they should somehow interact with others in the class, be it in group discussions or dialogs. Some believed that they could relate stories or other information to the speaking context. A third of the students underscored the importance of input, half of whom preferred watching movies. They think that watching subtitled films once a week may help them to acquire correct pronunciation, a wide range of vocabulary and improve their listening abilities.

Others mentioned reading, listening to authentic conversations, and memorizing prefabricated chunks may be also worthy to improve their listening abilities.

The theme of input emerged even more conspicuously in students' responses to how the instructor could help them most (12 instances). In addition to the being provided with input from the sources mentioned, two students wanted the instructor to 'give them information about speaking,' and one suggested memorizing vocabulary. The students also craved for motivation (7 instances), both in the form of encouragement and coercion from the instructor. Moreover, four students asked for whole class speaking activities such as discussions and individual speaking activities such as retelling stories and giving presentations.

The students believed that teaching learning process should include more group work, corrective feedback, and English practice. As a confirmation of students' demand for more discussions and dialogues, seven of the students believed that they should work in groups. However, in doing so, they wanted to be obliged to speak in English, a result that confirms the questionnaire's finding that they spoke in their L1 during the class hour (11 instances). Also, the students wanted corrective feedback from the instructor (7 instances).

The students' answer to question one – other possible activities and their preferred frequency – generally confirmed the above mentioned issues. They wanted to watch more films (8 instances), engage in dialogs (1

instance), prepare presentations (1 instance), be placed under pressure and encouraged to talk (1 instance), or listen more (1 instance). A different suggestion over the activities in the questionnaire was imitation (4 instances). One student suggested imitating local accents; another, songs. Still another asked for memorizing roles in a theatrical production and staging it.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluation of the course revealed several significant results in that more pair work and group work is favored by the students. Student-centered classes are not preferred by the majority of the students. More peer correction is regarded as a helpful activity that might also serve to constitute a friendly atmosphere in class, which most students complained about. Students' perceptions clearly indicated that the most frequently used type of instructional method was students' presentations. From open ended question section, it is obvious that student do not prefer lecture type classes. They prefer interactive, entertaining and cooperative tasks in their learning process. As for the recommendation for the future studies, the study can be reinforced by means of classroom observations, teacher interviews, learner diaries and recordings which will obviously give more reliable and generalisable results.

6. Limitations

The main limitation of this study was that the sample size was not big enough to have more generalizable results. Therefore, it is assumed that the relation between the student perceptions and success rates may reveal different results in a more comprehensive study.

Another limitation was that some of the responses students gave in open ended question part fell short of providing a clear 'picture'. Hence, these responses needed further elaboration.

For example, five students mentioned that they wanted 'activities' in class, without giving any more information. The evaluator and the instructor came to believe that an activity could be engaging students in more production-oriented tasks or providing them with a variety of tasks. Although all the students believed that the teacher tried to motivate them, seven of the students stated that they needed more encouragement and inducement. The last limitation which is worth mentioning was concerned with data collection instruments. Classroom observations, teacher interviews, learner diaries and recordings could not be done which could have given more detailed insights in the study.

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